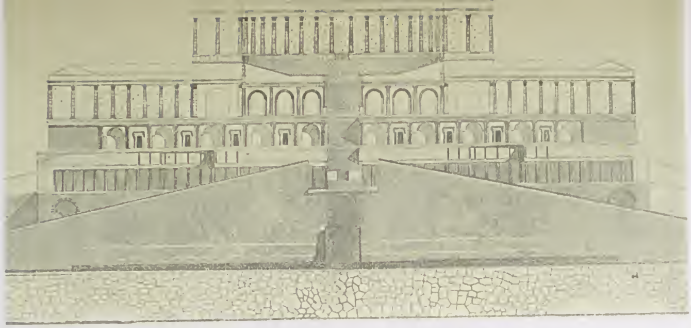

Reconstruction of the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina in a drawing by the architect Furio Fasolo.

trance or the palace overlooking the slope with the garden below, out towards the plains of Rome. And of course we are well aware of the important role played by the scenic in Ligorio's architectural compositions.

All these factors — a « permanent post » at the service of the d'Este family, excavation and study of Hadrian's Villa and the artworks found there, drawings made of the sanctuary and the Roman villas of Rome and Tivoli, literary background and a passion for imitating antiquity, constant use of the scenic element — would seem more than enough to confirm the traditional attribution of the Villa d'Este to Pirro Ligorio, despite the lack of an actual commission among the partial documents we have on hand. Perhaps there was no real need for a proper contract. It is more than likely that in times so prone to pomp and circumstance such a vast celebrative conception would fit into Ippolito d'Este's grandiose ambitions. Who else would he have turned to at such time if not his personal antiquarian-architect?

When work on the villa came to a halt during the papacy of Paul IV (1555-1559), Ligorio's activity continued in Rome where he was appointed papal architect for the new Vatican building projects. During this period he started work on the Casino in the Vatican Gardens (which later came to be known as the Villa Pia or Casino of Pius IV after the pope in whose reign it was completed). Together with Rocco da Montefiascone he covered the walls of the Casino with stucco reliefs and countless decorative motifs mostly in his typical style stressing the scenic element. During this period he summarized his accomplishments as an « antiquario » in forty voluminous manuscripts on the antiquities of Rome which he intended to publish and which were anxiously awaited by the whole intellectual world. Of the forty planned, only a slender volume entitled « Book by Pirro Ligorio Neapolitan Concerning the Roman Antiquities » ever appeared (actually it was meant as the preface to the magnum opus). Published in Venice in 1553, it discusses the circuses, theaters, and amphitheaters of ancient Rome and reveals the critical methods Ligorio used in the identification of Roman monuments. Unfortunately, in order to defend his theories, Ligorio did not hesitate to insert inscriptions he himself had made up in the antique style as part of the genuine documentary evidence. This did much to harm his reputation and cast suspicion on his whole oeuvre. Then in 1558 he published another book, this time on the Baths of Diocletian.

During the following years, he took part in the projects of the Palazzo della Sapienza and the Belvedere Court in the Vatican. For the latter he designed the curvilinear-shaped covering of the niche. It too was evidently inspired by the Sanctuary of Palestrina. At the same time, he was involved in building the Palazzo Torres, now known as Palazzo Lancellotti, in Piazza Navona and was also supervisor of the work then being carried out on the d'Este buildings in Rome, i.e. the Quirinal and Monte Giordano Palaces, and at Tivoli. He got into a quarrel with Michelangelo to the point that the peppery old Florentine threatened to abandon the St. Peter's project if Ligorio did not stop interfering. When Michelangelo died, Ligorio was appointed supervisor of St. Peter's along with — but out ranking — Vignola. During these years he gave vent to his restless, belligerent personality (he liked to sign himself « Meisopogniro » i.e. « hater of evil men »). In 1565 he was imprisoned, although the